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Nuit Blanche

By AMY LOWELL

I want no horns to rouse me up to-night,
And trumpets make too clamorous a ring
To fit my mood, it is so weary white
I have no wish for doing anything.

A music coaxed from humming strings would please;
Not plucked, but drawn in creeping cadences
Across a sunset wall where some Marquise
Picks a pale rose amid strange silences.

Ghostly and vaporous her gown sweeps by
The twilight dusking wall, I hear her feet
Delaying on the gravel, and a sigh,
Briefly permitted, touches the air like sleet.

And it is dark, I hear her feet no more.
A red moon leers beyond the lily-tank.
A drunken moon ogling a sycamore,
Running long fingers down its shining flank.

A lurching moon, as nimble as a clown,
Cuddling the flowers and trees which burn like glass.
Red, kissing lips, I feel you on my gown—
Kiss me, red lips, and then pass—pass.

Music, you are pitiless to-night.
And I so old, so cold, so languorously white.

Conte Giovanni Lapini

By PAUL ELDRIDGE

C ONTE Giovanni Lapini is one of the most respected men of Firenze. He is known as the "just," and upon several occasions disputants have preferred his judgment to that of the courts. His reputation was established many years ago, and it has never been questioned since or eclipsed.

At the age of thirty, il Conte became the owner of a magnificent estate on the outskirts of the City, in the heart of a poverty-stricken population. He had traveled much, read the Latin poets and orators, and bought many canvasses representing Christ tortured,—Christ on crosses, Christ stretched upon the ground, Christ on trees, Christ with a thousand spears in his body, Christ whipped, Christ buried——His father had been very easy going. Half of the fruit and vegetables was stolen by the neighbors and even by people living at a distance. Il Conte Giovanni always reprimanded him for it, but he would smile and quote long passages from the Christian fathers on charity and brotherhood.

Now, however, he was free to do as he pleased. He built a tall stonewall about the estate, which he called "Il Muro di China." When it was ready, he hailed upon it several large placards, printed in heavy letters, in black and red ink, according to their importance, proclaiming a new regime, the gist of which being that any one jumping, "Il Muro di China," and trying to rob the orchard or garden, should expect severe punishment.

The people looked at one another, not knowing whether to take this as the whim of an eccentric conte, meaning nothing, or the decision of an iron-hearted man, meaning everything. Some were of the former opinion, others of the latter.

"It's a jest!"

"It's serious!"

"He is like his father."

"He is not!"

"When I need apples or carrots, I know where to find them—very cheap."

"I advise you to beware."

The people waited to see who would be the watchman, or what terrible dogs would be imported from England or Russia. But no watchman was engaged, and no dogs were seen.

"It's nothing, I tell you!"

"Just an empty threat!"

"I advise you to beware!"

The crop that year was very poor; the hens were stricken with an unknown malady that carried them off like flies; the cows languished, and gave half the usual amount of milk. Within "Il Muro di China," however, there was always enough to help many a poor man to tide the bad season.

Many continued to say—"It's a jest. He is like his father," but they were always discouraged by the others, and by the formidable proclamation in black and red ink.

At last, however, two of the neediest and pluckiest decided to jump "Il Muro,"—a man whose wife was a paralytic, and an old woman with muscles hard as an athlete's, whose daughter, a widow, died, leaving her a grand-child of ten. The four lived together in a two-room hut not far from the estate.

They chose a very cloudy night. They needed no light to guide them, and a heavy rain-storm would not be much of a hindrance. The man jumped first, then helped the woman over. Once in they chose different roads. She was to get vegetables and he fruit. They knew the lanes perfectly.

Ten minutes later, the old woman uttered a terrible shriek. Just as the man was going to ask her what the trouble was, the words changed in his throat into a sharp scream that resembled a hog's, partially stabbed.

"Help! Aiuto! Aiuto! Misericordia! Misericordia!"

There had been no discharge of a gun nor the barking of dogs, and if the sound of their cries did penetrate into the tightly shut homes of the neighbors, nobody paid any attention. Such cries were quite usual,—husbands beating wives or children; children beating their parents; brothers fighting one another.

"Help! Help! Help!"

It began to rain—a sudden great pelting of heavy streams of water through which the lightning pierced and was extinguished and the thunder rolled like a colossal chariot upon cobble-stones, seeking in great haste some fabulous refuge.

"Help! Aiuto! Help!"

Their cries were drowned in the mightier cry of Nature, but il Conte Giovani heard them. His hearing was acute. He was standing on the balcony watching the rain. He loved Nature in her moments of anguish. It was like another canvas with a gigantic Christ agonizing. At every flash of the lightning he saw the old woman rolling on the ground pulling desperately at her right leg; he saw the man tearing at his left arm. He felt neither pity nor revenge. It was part of Nature, a note in her

clamorous music. Had a soft moon flooded the estate or a sky of stars glittered among the leaves of the trees, he would have felt annoyed, and no doubt entered at once into the Castle. He loved harmony,—colors, sounds, ideas.

"Aiuto! For the love of Gesu! Conte! Conte!"

A chilly wind made il Conte shiver. "I am no longer young," he thought pathetically, and entered into his study, where he opened one of his old Latin books, bound and illuminated by some unknown monk, who was an exquisite artist.

When a very long time had elapsed and the two had not yet returned, the paralytic woman called anxiously to the little girl, who was asleep: "Maria! Maria! Maria!"

"What?"

"La nonna and Giorgio haven't returned yet. I am afraid something happened to them."

The little girl closed her eyes, and was on the point of falling asleep again.

"Maria! Maria!"

"What?"

"Get up, cara mia, and look out of the window. Perhaps you can see them coming or hear their footsteps."

The little girl covered her head with an empty burlap sack, and looked out of the small window.

"No, zia, I can't see them, and I can't hear their footsteps."

"Holy Mother, have pity on us! Gesu, misericordia!"

At dawn, the rain stopped. The sun's rays seemed very vigorous and promised a beautiful day.

"Dress quickly, carissima, and knock at the gate. See what has happened, Misericordia, Sanctissima, have pity on us!"

The little girl lifted and dropped the hammer for several minutes before the angry porter opened the gate.

"Who's there? What do you want?"

"La mia nonna and Giorgio."

"What about them?"

"They haven't come back." And she began to sob.

"Where did they go to?"

The little girl pointed to the wall.

"Oh, that's it, that's it. Well, I guess they'll never come back any more."

The little girl screamed.

"Their own fault. Il Conte warned the people. But they are thieves. Do you know what a thief is, bambina?"

The little girl nodded.

"Well, thieves must be punished. Besides, il Conte still sleeps, and I have orders never to enter the orchard before he wakes. I obey orders, cara mia, and you should too,—do you hear?"

She nodded.

"Ecco." And he closed the door.

Il Conte Giovani Lapini slept well that night. The rain always had a sporific effect upon him. It lulled him like the cradle-songs his nurse used to sing to him,—oh how long ago, he thought, as he opened wide his eyes. "Life is a dream—un sogno—a vague dream. Ah, why does it pass so quickly? So much beauty soon to be left behind,—the women one loves, the Christs one has collected, the garden that—" He remembered, "yes, the thieves of last night."

The porter told him that a little girl was waiting at the door to see her grandmother and a man by the name of Gorgio who—"

"Yes, yes, I know. Bring her in."

Il Conte liked children, particularly little girls who were near the age of womanhood. He patted Maria on the head, asked her her name, whether she went to school, where she lived, how old she would be at her next birthday.

"Now let's see how your grandmother and Giorgio get along."

Il Conte wanted witnesses. He ordered the porter to bring in several people.

"Signori, you have all read the placards upon 'Il Muro di China.' Well, last night two persons, a man and a woman, dared to disobey my orders. They have been punished as they should have been. Am I right?"

The people nodded.

"I beg you to come with me, and bear witness, that the punishment they have received is but their just reward."

Il Conte took the little girl's hand and preceded the company.

"I use neither gun nor dogs, signori," said il Conte as they had made several steps into the orchard. I believe in self-punishment. It's an impersonal affair. Indeed, I do not inflict the penalty at all. The transgressors inflict it themselves. It's just, is it not?"

"Si, si."

"A punto, here—"

The company stopped before the old woman, who lay half drowned in the mud, her neck outstretched, her mouth wide open, filled with shrubs and flies, and her eyes rolled entirely backward dazzling in the sun like two bits of porcelain.

"She's already dead, as you see, signori.."

"Nonna—la mia nonna!" Maria sobbed, pulling her little hand out of il Conte's.

"Wait, little one, wait!"

"Nonna! Nonna!"

Il Conte tightened his grip over her wrist. "Don't cry, bambina!"

"Here, signori, look!" And he pointed to her left leg captured in a large trap, only partially seen now in the great black swelling.

"As you see, her foot walked where it should not have walked,—and therefore it was but just that it should be punished. That the rest of the body suffered likewise only proves how terrible a thing is a crime,—does it not, signori?"

A few heads nodded. The rest looked on, stunned.

"I told them to beware."

"I knew it was serious."

Several paces farther on Giorgio was hanging by the wrist caught in a trap placed around a heavy branch of the tree.

"In this case, signora, it was the hand that sinned."

Il Conte looked long at the thin, agonized face covered with mud and long streams of coagulated blood, and thought of a fine canvas for a Christ—Christ the thief, stealing the souls of men. He was on the point of telling them this, when he remembered that they were peasants, not artists, and would not understand him.

"But I believe he is not dead."

He ordered immediately his porter and another servant to take the man off, and carry him to bed in one of the elegant spare rooms of the castle; while a third servant he ordered to fetch a doctor and a nurse.

"If the man lives, it is not my intention to kill him. Justice has already been done. And Justice is the basis of any civilized community—non e vero, signori?"

"I told him so!"

"I knew it!"

"Nonna! Nonna!" the little girl sobbed.

"Signori, this is Justice, and what follows shall be Justice also. I promise solemnly to take care of this little girl, who has lost her grandmother, to educate her, and give her a dowry when the time comes. I promise to bury the grandmother decently. I promise to take care of this man until he is well, if he does get well. If not, if he is married—"

"His wife is paralyzed," some one interrupted.

"Well, then, I shall take care of her. In any case, signori, I promise solemnly that only the guilty shall suffer, and the rest shall know my liberality. Am I just?"

"Just! Just! Just!"

"I'd give my two grandmothers for half the money the girl will receive."

"I'd add my grandfathers into the bargain."

"Just! Perfectly just!"

"I told them to beware!"

Il Conte ordered a glass of his best wine for the company, and entered the castle with the little girl.

Il Conte was better than his word. The old woman was buried decently, and a stone in the form of a cross placed upon her tomb. Giorgio was taken care of until cured, and having lost his left arm was engaged to do some light, nominal work in the garden. Maria received a good education, and at eighteen was given into marriage to a second-lieutenant whose cards and tailor debts were paid and rank raised to captaincy.

The people find a great resemblance between Maria's first child, now a major in the cavalry, and il Conte. If this is not mere gossip, and optical illusion, everyone is quite certain that the young man will be amply provided for in il Conte's will.

History

By MALCOLM COWLEY

If I told you that in this house
with boarded windows, where doors gape stupidly,
where grey wallpaper twists away from the plaster like the whorls of a
dead brain—

If I told you that in this house there lived
Solomon Carney; that he built the fireplace
with a trowel and a hammer and his two hands;
that John and Rebecca died here of smallpox in the year when the
doctor was held at Beulah, twenty miles away;
or about the last son, Amos, who cleared the back fields
and married in time and was crushed in the first steam thresher;
and about his children that moved West (O the slow bleeding of the
soil)

If I told you this it would mean as much to you
as an entry in a second-hand Bible—no more.
And yet the Rome of Edward Gibbon,
seven volumes of print, cast in eight point solid with footnotes, contains
nothing more than this.

A Troublesome Charm

By RICHARD BOWLAND KIMBALL

TERRANCE was as straight a lad as any in the Four Counties, good at the pipes and the harp, the drink and the women, and he could hurl a spear. With a song on his lips, a smile in his eyes, and back of it a shadow of sadness, he wandered where he willed, and Seumas went with him—stopping outside till the love-making should be over, sharpening his spear, mending his harp when Terrance broke the strings of it because they wouldn't sing as he wanted, catching the bag-pipes when Terrance threw them at his head.

Nary a drop of the mountain dew would Seumas take till Terrance was safely asleep with the drink in him, and in the morning he woke him with a sup of water from the spring. Not a differ did it make whether they slept under the thatch of a roof or the sky of the heavens, and it seemed that the songs and the fights and the drinking and the love-making would never come to an end.

But the good it is that never in this world lasts at all, at all; and in the days of a rainy spring and a sunshiny summer, even a step-mother could see that Terrance was not himself. Never had he sung such songs at whiles and at whiles been so silent; never had he drunk so deep and been so sober; and the smile was drowned by the sadness in his eyes.

Both lads knew the trouble, but they couldn't help talking about it.

"Ach! Shiela! Shiela! Sitting in her window without a smile! I have killed a wild pig—as well you know, Seumas—and brought it to her on my spear. I have sung her all my songs. But devil a smile on the lips of her, devil a look of pity even in her eyes! Ach! Shiela! Shiela!" And to the eyes of himself the tears came.

"Let her sit till she rots, bad cess to her!" says Seumas. "If she's not for you, there are plenty of others. Kathleen in the north—there's a fine broth of a girl for you."

"With a clutch like the kick of a horse!"

"Well if you're not for strong loving there's Norah of the South Glen—a wisp of a girl."

"A wool-sack more than a woman," cries Terrance and spits.

"If it's hair you're after, Mary in the east gives the light to the sunrise."

"Sure, there's no color in the world but black! Have you minded the curls at the back of Shiela's neck?"

"Faith and I haven't, thank God! I was never one for white faces. Ellen of the West Water—there's color for you, with her freckles like golden dust in the sun."

"Ach, Seumas, the skin of Shiela is moonlight with the blood flushing under it like the blood of a rose!"

"I grant," says Seumas, "that she has a good digestion, but that's no reason you should ruin your own."

"If it was only in my digestion I was

wounded, Seumas! But it's deeper than that. It's my heart that's hurt. To the soul of me I'm touched, so that I can sing and never be satisfied, and drink and never be drunk, and weep and never be empty, and look at her and never be filled!"

Seumas scratches his head.

"Well, if you're that bad off, I don't see what's for you excepting you butter her feet."

"What's that you're after saying—butter her feet?"

"Often you've heard the saying that if you butter a cat's feet, she'll never be leaving you, and I don't see why it wouldn't act the same with a woman as a cat."

"Meaning that women are cats?"

"Cats are they, every one of them, if you scratch deep enough."

"Butter her feet!" says Terrance, starting to laugh. "Butter her feet!" and he stops laughing. "Seumas, my boy, I'll butter her feet, if only for the joy of touching them!"

"Touch her feet, and much good may it do you! I'm not a lover, thank God!"

"But how can I butter her feet, Seumas? She's not one to run wild in a bog bare-footed."

"No, bad cess to her! Or you could have clapped an arm round her in a hedge-corner, and we would have been saved a pound of good butter this day."

"But, Seumas, what if the butter doesn't move her at all, at all?"

"Tell her to go to the devil and forget all about her. And if you fetched her a clout along the side of the head, it would be for the good of her soul."

"My heart leaps up the more that I

think of it. This will be no common buttering, my bucko!"

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll lead and ye'll follow. I could straddle the mountains and cross Killarney itself without wetting my foot!"

Away goes Terrance, the wind in his hair, and Seumas behind him as if the game wardens were after them both. Up into the hills they go and down into the valleys, beside the still water and the broken water, and "Where are you going?" asks Seumas at last.

"Devil a bit do I know. The hope in my heart is leading me. Love is leading me so fast I'm like to meet myself coming back!"

"Sure, I've been bumping into myself the last half hour," says Seumas.

"Rest and be damned to you," says Terrance. "Sit down and we'll have a drop."

He unstraps his harp from his shoulder and starts a song, all about the buttering of Shiela—ten ways did he butter her feet in the song, one way for each toe.

"'Tis a fine song," says Seumas. "They'll be singing it when you're scorching in purgatory."

"Whist!" says Terrance.

"Holy Mother of God!" says Seumas. "Was that the cry of a banshee from the woods?"

"'Tis not the cry of death but of life we're hearing, the sound I've been following and waiting for all along!"

Up he leaps and Seumas is up beside him, and they go where the sun on the leaves of the branches shines like the windows in Holy Church.

"Sure, if there was three of us, we'd be like the Wise Men of the East," says

Terrance, and they come to a cow and her new-born calf. She had licked the blood of his birth all off of him, and he crying to her and all of a-tremble in the legs.

"The Babe in the Manger was not any prettier," says Terrance, "and the Virgin Herself would not be more welcome than you are this day," says he to the cow. "I'll trouble you for a drop of your milk, if the Lord gives me cunning to take it. And remember, my darling, if you make an objection, I'll hit you a lick."

Devil a drop of her milk did she hold out to him, for Terrance had a taking way, even with cows. One squirt in the bowl and three squirts on the ground was the way of it.

"Faith," says Terrance, "I'm spattering milk all over God's green earth! But here's the bowl filled at last—may the saints be praised for it!—and I hope there's some left for the calf."

Under a fern-leaf he puts it to rise.

"May the leprechauns keep it from curdling, because it's a charm."

"'Tis sorry I am that I ever suggested the buttering," says Seumas. "Sure the Holy Fathers themselves have warned us against casting spells of black or white magic, and 'tis themselves ought to know, for they have a witchcraft of their own."

"Sure, living is nothing but magic," says Terrance. "Drinking is magic and singing is magic and loving is magic. And fighting is magic, too, as soon I'll show you if you don't mend your tune."

"I'm for you!" says Seumas and at it they go. On the bracken they struggle till both fall over, winded and laughing.

"'Tis better I'm feeling," says Seumas, wiping the blood from his face.

One twist of the knife in the morning and the cream in the bowl turns to butter, and homeward they go—into the valleys and over the hills, beside the broken water and the still water, and they come at last to Shiela's door.

It's night and no moon when they reach it, but a light in her window, and the shadow of herself going forwards and back.

"We'll hide in the hedge till she blows out the rush," whispers Terrance, "and you watch from the hedge. I wouldn't be seen climbing in at her window. Faith, I'm as trembly as a new-born calf!"

"If we don't rue the work of this night," whispers Seumas, "I'll have a mass said for the worst of my enemies if I have to steal the money to pay for it."

"Whist!" says Terrance. "The light's out!"

Over to the window he creeps and into it he climbs, quaking, with Seumas, watching him, quaking in the hedge. No sound and no light from the window. The earth ceases breathing. Time stops.

Then out of the window comes Terrance and pulls Seumas out of the hedge.

"I've done it, my bucko, I've done it! The banns will be read out next Sunday in church."

"The banns are ye saying?" says Seumas.

"I buttered her feet and kissed her! Oh, Seumas, the touch of her shift! The feel of her hair on the pillow! The dew of her face from the sleep!"

"If I'd known you intended to marry, I'd never have told you to butter her feet."

"Why should't I marry? Why shouldn't I have her to hold and to keep for my own?"

"Oh, Terrance, ye've killed me entirely! But love that would lead us to marriage only marriage can cure."

"I could clout you for that, but I won't."

"And well I know why. 'Tis no longer you care for me. When I think of the times that you've broken my head over nothing at all, I could weep!"

"Weep and be damned! There's no pleasing you! To the devil, say I!"

"And to the devil I'm going! Good-night!"

Away goes Seumas.

He is gone for a month and a year.

At the end, he is back again, knocking at Terrance's door, and Terrance is opening it.

"Whist! Shiela is poking the peat and maybe she didn't hear you knocking. It's in I should be asking you, Seumas, but it's better that you should be asking me out."

He takes Seumas's arm and goes tip-toeing over the turf with him and pulls him down beside him in a corner of the hedge.

"Is it himself I'm seeing this day?" says Seumas, "Hiding in a hedge corner for nothing at all?"

"Ach, Seumas, the thorns of a hedge are sweeter to the back than too loving an arm!"

"Too loving an arm are ye saying?"

"May God forgive you for telling me to butter her feet, Seumas, for I cannot."

"Is there no satisfying you at all, at all? Before the buttering, there was never a smile on the face of you!"

"And now I could make a flood-tide of the sea with my tears!"

"Sure, sing of your sorrows and that will be the end of them."

"Sing are you saying? Of what should I sing? Of Shiela? Of love in the peat-smoke and love in the porridge and love in the potatoes, of love in the evening and love at the crack o' dawn? Sure no man can sing of the colleen he's got!"

"Then sing of the others, bad cess to her!"

"Faith, I'd sing of them all if I dared."

"Are you afraid for your eyes?"

"What's an eye more or less between husband and wife?"

"Then hit her a lick and leave her."

"'Tis beating only makes the heart grow fonder, Seumas, and leave her I can't."

"And why not?"

"'Tis her gentleness holds me, Seumas, her weakness. Would you have me leave a kitten crying after its mother? Could I be leaving a new-born calf? Ach, Seumas, our virtues are the weakest things about us! If the Lord had sense, He'd have given us harder hearts."

"Hard hearts, are ye saying?" comes a voice from behind the hedge.

Up leaps Terrance and Seumas is up beside him, and they stand looking at Shiela, and herself looking back at them, sharper than any thorn.

"So it's yourself, is it, coming to toll him away from me? Go back to the devil that sent you, you spitting image of Satan himself!"

"Faith, Terrance has just been saying what a gentle creature ye are," says Seumas.

"Sure, if I had my way, I'd put a sup of water in the mouth of you and set you over the fire till it boiled. That for my gentleness and your blarney!" says she, planting her fists on her hips.

Around the hedge steps Terrance and into the doorway he goes.

"When you find me paying you compliments," says Seumas, "you can pluck feathers from a tom-cat's tail, and that will be never. Why cannot you leave your husband alone, like a decent married woman?"

"Who are you, to tell me what to do or not do?"

"If it hadn't been for myself, you would never have had him."

"Indeed and wisha! Sure and I'm thanking you this day!" and she makes him a curtsy.

"'Tis well that ye grin, for 'tis nothing but butter that holds you."

"Butter, ye say?"

"Sure, I told Terrance to butter your feet, may God forgive me for it! Your love is nothing but butter—'tis nought but a charm—and now that you know it, the charm will be broken, and you can go traipsing and trolloping the way nature intended."

"Butter my feet, is it? I'll butter your head with a three-legged stool!"

She doubles her fists and is around the hedge after him, but Seumas is dancing away from her, a grin on his face and hope beating high in his heart.

"Sure, the charm will be broken, now that she knows of it," says he to himself, "and my conscience will not have to carry that sin. He'll throw the pot and she'll throw the kettle, and they'll be

warmed by the hate that is natural between husband and wife. Away we'll go, singing and fighting and love-making, and many's the night he'll be stiff with the drink in him, glory be to God!"

Seumas waits for a week and a day.

It's night when he comes to the house, and the turf fire is glowing. Through the window he looks and "Wirra! Wirra!" he cries, stepping back.

In the glow of the turves sits Terrance and Shiela is sitting beside him, she sewing and Terrance peeling potatoes, a smock round his neck.

"The look on the face of him!" says Seumas, and back to the window he steps.

Under his foot a stick crackles. Shiela opens the door.

"Sure, I thought I heard some one," says she. "And is it yourself? Why aren't you knocking? Why don't you come in like a friend and see Terrance and me?"

"Faith, it wouldn't be Terrance I'd see! Is it a sheep or a woman you've made of him, with the smock round his neck?"

Shiela closes the door and steps out.

"Have ye noticed the change?"

"Parish church in clear daylight is not as plain as his face! 'Tis the face of a man that pays taxes, 'tis a face that fears rain and the neighbors' opinions, 'tis a face with a pain in its back that needs rubbing, 'tis contented and empty and soft-like and dead without knowing it! 'Tis a face that is waiting for its own wake! Musha! Musha! What have ye done?"

"Sure, while he was sleeping I buttered his feet, and this night I am thanking ye, Seumas!"

"Oh, Terrance is done for! I've lost him. I've lost him! Achone! Achone!"

Away goes Seumas. Under the stars he goes till he comes to a river and he sits on a stone and takes out his knife to pick his teeth and think.

"Ach, to be married and live happily ever after is a devil of a life! Never a drink in you, nor a song out of you, nor a day's hunting, nor a night of wild loving under the stars. There's neither marrying nor giving in marriage in heaven, and that's why it is heaven and, sure, heaven is a great place for songs.

"One jab of the knife, and my troubles would all be over, my life running into the river and the river not rising at all. Terrance's soul will go out at the door at the time that's appointed, and Shiela's soul will go out at the window, and the charm will be loosed.

"I would be on ahead, preparing a place for him, stringing the harp, putting a patch on the bagpipes, and setting out the bowl. Maybe the Holy Saints will give me a harp that never needs stringing and a bowl that never goes

dry. Maybe Terrance will play on bagpipes filled with the winds that blow between the worlds.

"From afar off, I'll see him coming, and shout to him, and he'll shout back to me. Maybe he'll fetch me a clout to show how well he knows me. Maybe he'll break my head under the eyes of Almighty God!"

The knife slips and strikes him and splashes into the river.

"Sure," says Seumas, sucking his wrist, "I've been a long journey while sitting on the stone—to heaven and back again—and treated with great honor and respect by everybody, by Saint Peter on his golden throne and the lesser Saints in their niches like dog-kennels. 'Tis dead I've been and resurrected, without waiting for the third day.

"Terrance is gone, but somewhere I'll find another laddie-buck, and if I don't, I'm good company for myself. Faith, heaven is only for them that can't get out of it. I'm glad I came back."

And under the stars goes Seumas, whistling a tune.

Epigram

By JAMES FEIBLEMAN

Some trudge to death alone, but some
Want love for their viaticum.

Kit Marlowe to Cabell

By JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY

Pastels are diffident. Play a carmine, bold
Across the sheets. Blood, man; pour blood!
Have you any in you?
Life's not a questing for will-o'-the-wisps,
Delicate, flitting a lure;
Life is a lust, a fever;
Life burns at both ends,
You speak of a veil with twenty-seven slits;
Life tears veils aside.

Have you ever waited, on a stormy night of spring,
Fallen foul of a maid, and bundled her,
A delicious squirming squealing petticoat,
To a cosy bed,
Tousled and tussling, only half afraid,
But able now to cry she was unwilling—
Have you ever fought all comers for a maid?

When were you drunk last, James?
Have you ever reeled, rollicking, damning the state,
Spun a corner—into the arms of the law?
You and a pal or two, and for a lark
Muzzled the watch and borne their lanterns off
And stopped all honest citizens on their way
And bunked them in a stable for the night?

List me your pranks; I'll match them double-time,
Or hang my tail upon the tavern-port
For gulls to twit.

Man's love of woman is the least of life—
Like food, perhaps, but no more imminent;
Man builds his world on lust of gold or power.
Fashion a harem where a king may loll,
Anthony, Heliogabalus.
And the people writes—but let the king grow wroth,
Let him sweep conquering over continents,
Alexander, Caesar, or our own great king,
And patriots run to die to clear his way.

You pick me (thanks, friend), out of a many more
 And say I am the true economist.
 How Moll would laugh, if she caught the praise,
 Dangling my empty purse from her finger-tip
 And pouting for silk hose to match her garters!
 My life, you say, was spent wisely. Did I wear
 A cloak whose pattern was my choosing? Wish
 The way I went? I burned across my years
 Like any guzzler on the Mermaid bench
 Who drank and fought and whored to kill King Time.

There is a fellow here; love's labor's lost
 Indeed ('twas a play he wrote) trying to fuddle him.
 We mock him when he sips his sober glass
 And holds back from our boisterous company—
 What a world of fun he misses!—yet I know
 That had I held myself like him, the flame
 That flares in me might be a steady glow
 Through decades—

Did you see the wench that passed
 The window, turned her eye this way—just now?
 Rare-fashioned for these parts, iced! Is my
 Feather flaunting? I'll be after her;
 It's April since I've kissed as fair a face.
 Don't smile, you humbug; but I saw her first,
 You have no claim. One word before I go:
 Match me a Tamerlane with Kennaston,
 Pit Jurgen to my Faustus; strike the flint;
 Stir in their bowels the search man never ends,
 And I have lusty life where you have—love.
 Damme! I'll lose her 'less I hurry off.
 Smear carmine on your pages, James. Farewell.

Two Poems

By ROBERT J. ROE

Verlaine

I

The pool reflects silent music under frigid trees
Sends a wavering smoke of music tangling the stiff branches
And he is lured and drawn
Among the writhe and shine of vaporous serpents,
Haunted and sucked into pools of melody.

II

The splotched waters of tints
Receive and swallow him under
And he goes protesting at last
With a scarred, ironic hand.

III

He loses his body in a grey stiff chant
Like a stone portico of pillars
And they will make his soul do service
As a freize of carven music.

Cattleman's Wife

The cattleman sprawls with stumpy hands
Locked behind his beefy neck
Listening to the carnal rumbling
Of bulls out of the desert.
While the sensual evening
Drags blunt blue fingers
Down the quaking yellow flanks
Of the gully
 and the young wife
Watches with fatal eyes.

The "Badling of Ducks"

A Fragment From One of the Volumes of the Old England Series

By BERNARD GILBERT

MRS. REMUS NEWTON.

Here's the place where I met Julius before and that's the alley where—but it was dark then—I wonder if he liked me saying here It sounds a bit on doesnt it but I didn't know where else to say and he told me he always made the Badling of Ducks his headquarters when hes in Bly with the shows Its a good thing today was a whole holiday so I could get in with the carrier much bettern coming by train and walking all the way to and from Belton Junction coz nobody ever gives you a lift when youre fagged out I do hope Julius wont be mad because I wrote that I was afraid something had happened but why didnt he answer my last Hes bound to say he never had it though I sent it to his Barkston address and its nearly three months since Ive seen him Theres nobody in Barnet worth speaking to nor Belton either now Sidney Browns turned respectable Whoever could sleep with men like Mr. Wren and Mr. Ramsbotham Their wives dont seem to mind They say all cats are grey by night but the blackest night wouldnt make men like them lively and anyway that tale was made up by men who dont really care what they have when theyre randy Women are different though Thats the best of Julius whos been all over and seen everything and knows how to talk to a woman Poor little Remus with his queer ways Talk about old maids not in it and lately wont have the bedroom window open on the hottest night for fear somebody should be listening A fat lot of good theyd get if they did and nobody in Low Barnet would be so silly unless someone like that horrible old Kitchin whos so used to cutting pigs throats that they say hes made moren one mistake on a dark night and nobody will go near his cottage after dusk Theres something wrong about a man that lives by hisself Its not in the way of nature Jerry Grace does of course but he goes out to look for women and I nearly caught him the night after the Wesleyan Thanksgiving with ? Archer though she wont own to it I should have liked Watson Tyler who was fierce and wanted a lot of moving but when he did move went all the way Neither of his lads takes after him Not for me thank you They say Arthur has his eye on the Armistage girl a fauce stuckup piece of goods but I dont think the mother would let her though Mrs. Bunting is full of talk as usual Oh Dear where is Julius I told him Id be here at half past to the minute and praps I threatened a bit too openly but what was I to do when he didnt take the least notice

of my last Mrs Hatch says men always sit up sharp if they think a womans going to have a baby by them and thats the best way she says to bring em round though Winnie Esdailes never told who her husbands were and nothing will make her I wonder why Hepzibah Barks I should say Brown but never remember has taken her for a servant Its caused a lot of talk and more than one think her husbands had something to do with it but I dont believe it for a minute He flew higher than that a good deal I used to wonder if I shouldnt like to have one baby Remus was always dying to and praps Id have respected him more then but theyre such a lot of bother and you lose four months pay Thats the worst of working with your husband Look at Miriam Hadow at Hordle never goes near the school nothing but a scrap of housework when she feels disposed while I do practically everything for that Archer girls less than no use at all Where *IS* Julius Where *IS* he Surely hes coming Its so no good him pretending hes not here when I know he is for I saw the shows set up on the Fair ground as we came into the town all ready for Boxing Day What a fellow he is When he first came to Barnet I mean the first time he had a talk with me as I was going home late from the Feast and I asked him when I should see him again and he said to meet him just here I never thought the time would come when he wouldnt turn up to meet me seeing how anxious he was then and how pressing I wrote only four days ago If hed answered my other letter I could have gone to Barkston easy because I always have the escuse of seeing Great Aunt Buggins at the fried-fish shop and she always offers me a bed only Julius is so silly about meeting anyone in Barkston as if it mattered Look at our beauty of a Canon and what hes been up to in Barkston by all accounts You wouldnt think it could be true and no one moren half believes it but hes been such a downer on everybody else it would be a treat ifit *WAS* and we shall soon hear more Whitton says its all made up by that rollicking relation of the Canons at Hordle who trots round with his stallion as bold as brass and why not After what they say in the marriage service they neednt boggle at anything else though theres no refinement anywhere in our villages except praps Ashby Holme I shall never forget that coarse Grocock at the postoffice when we were married saying it was a custom in Barnet for the Policeman and the Postmaster to see the married couple into bed to make sure there wasnt any slip or mistake I suppose he meant with the best man or the bridesmaids I often wonder how a real lady like Mrs. Irving can stop there I do hope nobody from our way comes to the Inn though Im standing well in the shade here and they all go in by the front door Julius said I wonder if hes met any other woman here You never know with men Never Never Dame Peach makes this her headquarters on market days a wonderful woman I owe her a little bill but shes very easy Fancy done three husbands in She ought to have a medal or marry that old goat Isaac Cheet-

ham of Pantacks whos had three wives and theyd have been a match Hes always hanging round Great Aunt Buggins though as if she would look at him That Ralph Bentonll have to be put down winking at me on the Ferryboat the night before last as if he knew something but Im certain he doesnt its only he thinks he owns Washover now Julius is not the sort of man to talk Ill say that for him and not a soul in Barnet dreams of anything Weve always been too careful though really youd almost think Remus had heard a whisper lately by the way hes hinting about village gossip but Im certain he hasnt because he cant keep anything in for moren a minute I know every thought that goes through his mind Why is it you cant respect a man you can twist round your finger Men ought to be stronger than women and if Id my time over Id try for Titus Ambrose the great rolling chap like a barge and his wife worships the ground he treads on they say Mrs. Hatch says her having relations down that part I do like a fine figure of a man Look at Mr Lubbock at the 'Coote Arms' always takes his hat off with a pleasant smile and so nicely dressed with his thick blue suits square cut collars and curly-brimmed hats I do like a man to be particular about his linen like Julius is and hls beard always kept trim Oh its hell to be buried in a hole like Low Barnet where nothing happens from years end to years end except praps that Bazaar when Hepzibah Barks outfaced everybody like a tiger but barring that affair and what followed which nobody will ever forget there's been nothing to keep you of dying from dullness and Remus says the same but will he move Not him For all his talk he likes it better than anywhere else because he knows everybody and all the gossip is butter Nothing Nothing except girls having babies and getting married three weeks before theyre born whichafter all isnt a bad idea because they know if theyre going to breed before they tie up to each other Susan Rowett was glaring at me all the way here in the van I should hate to be jealous just as if her lout of a husband was the only man in the parish I could make a better out of a turnip Why he darent as much as go within half a mile of another woman the poor frog I often wish Remus would kick over the traces a bit It would be interesting to watch his dodges Goodness knows Ive given him every chance but hes always mooning about writing a great book thats had sixty-seven first chapters torn up That Jerry Grace has a bad influence over him Youd think Remus could find more respectable friends I shant wait much longer Julius my man Praps if I walked along to the Fair ground I might meet him and hed better not let me see him with another woman but he wouldn't in the day time hes too careful and Ive no doubt he has plenty though I dont believe that tale about him and those girls at the Washover Hostel Miss Berners would never have allowed him to get into their dormitory and have them all dancing round the room as bare ar bublins while a played a concertina Its a silly tale as I said to Maud Norris for what good would it do

him Hes one that likes one woman at once somewhere in a corner or an alley He told me I was the only one hed ever really cared about or wanted to see again and I believed him like a poor fool No doubt he tells them all that though he swore he didnt and could hardly keep out of their way they run after him so his lifes a burden to him and he doublelocks his bedroom door every night Isnt it abominable to think of They cant have a scrap of self respect can they He said if anything happened to Remus we could be married he wanted so much to settle down with a woman like me I promised Mrs Irving to get her that white wool from Gormans for her Doris and Here he is No Its that young Glover Whats he hanging around here for the back way up to no good Ill be bound Hes going to speak to me Shall I talk to him Praps if I do Julius will come along and it wont look so bad if Im talking to someone else though hes not much when youve got him the little rat getting that Creasy girl in the family way and leaving....

TOM GLOVER

Is that that schoolmasters wife from Low Barnet A shapely piece too and would fall off a bough if you shook the tree I lay I wonder if I could get her into the old pub and then see how her pulse beats A fine pair of legs hasnt she and no wonder that poor fish that calls hisself her husband has a.....*Good morning, Mrs. Newton. Fancy seeing you here!*

MRS. NEWTON

We all come into market sometimes, you know, Mr. Glover specially on Xmas Eve. Whats he hinting at the little snipe as if I hadnt as much right to be here as him However could that nice quiet Creasey girl let him go and—

TOM GLOVER

Waiting for your husband, I suppose?

MRS. NEWTON

Good gracious me No! Hes safe at home; busy, and I shouldn't wait outside a public house for any man; Husband or not. The very idea What will he be thinking Im up to He must guess Im waiting for somebody If Julius comes along it will look queer but I cant help it now, and he shouldnt have been late.

TOM GLOVER

How well youre looking Mrs Newton. Younger than ever. You ought to come oftener to Bly you know and let us see you now and again.

MRS. NEWTON

Oh go along with that talk. Its alright for your Bly girls Mr. Glover but weve heard the tale before in the country. Does the little wretch think he making up to me Younger than ever He means well-covered of course Its wonderful how a good figure excites these little fellows.

TOM GLOVER

Youre laughing at me. But its true enough! Brrrrr! Its cold this morning. Were you thinking of stepping inside?

MRS. NEWTON

The public house? Well really! What do you take me for? I shouldnt mind at all really if I had a decent excuse but there might be anybody inside and it would look queer No I darent.

TOM GLOVER

Well, why on earth not, and have a glass of sherry to keep the chill out?

MRS. NEWTON

In low Barnet, Mr. Glover, no respectable woman goes into a public house. I wonder if Julius is in there after all Something tells me he is Oh I must look I darent ask this chap to go and see for me I wouldnt trust him an inch anyhow.

TOM GLOVER

Barnets Barnet; but they do here. Plenty of them. Besides, we could step into the private bar—just there—and should have it all to ourselves. Only the most respected go into the private bars and the landlord keeps them select so that you can feel quite safe. Do come now.

MRS. NEWTON

Well...If youre sure...thinks hes picking me up doesnt he and presently hes going to suggest that I should meet him in this alley after dusk to hear the carol-singers I know his sort of old but I can make use of him a bit if Julius is in the public bar I shall hear his voice and youd know that anywhere in the biggest crowd.

TOM GLOVER

Of course I am, come along. Thats it. Sit down here. Morning Mr. Judd. Nice sharp morning. Seasonable weather!

JOHNSON JUDD

Sharp last night they say: They that was up. Its a good enough morning for them thats thirsty. Now where the hell has Tom picked up that from A nice plump piece though.

TOM GLOVER

Quite right, Johnson. Let's have two large sherries please. The best.

JOHNSON JUDD

Right oh!

MRS. NEWTON

Now whose voice is that? Why its Jerry Grace of course I do hope he wont peep in here You said this was quite private, didnt you?

TOM GLOVER

Certainly! Those chaps are in the public saloon and Judd would never let em come round even if they wanted to which they never would in all

their lives. Why should they? You can hear Charlie Gray and David Tyler! No, they cant see us possibly. That screen is fixed so as they shouldnt.

MRS. NEWTON

Oh! I hope hes right.

JOHNSON JUDD

There you are Mr. Glover One and fourpence.

TOM GLOVER

There you are Mrs. Newton.. That'll warm you up nicely.

MRS. NEWTON

But not for you my lad and dont you think it Now suppose Julius comes to the alley whilst Im sitting here and doesnt wait I should look silly but of course if he got as far as this hed be bound to step inside. Thank you Mr. Glover. What a nice tie youve got on. I must humour the snipe.

TOM GLOVER

Now youre laughing at me again. I wish I was twice the size and then Id be able to talk to you properly.

MRS. NEWTON

Good gracious, whatever you do want to be bigger for? Good things are always done up in little packets! Really though, youre just right as you are. I hate those big coarse creatures like Julius Morgan and Titus Ambrose. I must be off to the Fair ground and get hold of Julius somehow I didn't mean to mention his name.

TOM GLOVER

You make me feel shy! I suppose a fine woman like you has the pick of all the handsome men for miles round Barnet! You never stay over night in Bey, I suppose.

MRS. NEWTON

There he goes the rat Thinks I shall jump the minute he holds his hand out I should be afraid to, Mr. Glover!

TOM GLOVER

Not if youd anyone to look after you, though! Surely?

MRS. NEWTON

You mean my husband, I suppose? Lets see how far he will go in a couple of minutes.

TOM GLOVER

Its nice to have a change though sometimes, Mrs. Newton. Strangers appreciate a woman most, they say!

MRS. NEWTON

Thinks hes getting along famous Thanks; but I like old friends best. Well.....I must be moving along. Got a lot of shopping to do.

TOM GLOVER

Oh, dont go yet. Have another sherry first. Whats the hurry?

MRS. NEWTON

No thanks.. Which is the door out. Oh I see Well. Thanks for your sherry Mr. Glover and good morn—Oh Its Remus! Oh goodness gracious what does this mean Oh dear what on earth....

REMUS NEWTON

Well My Dear—so Ive found you! Whos that?

MRS. NEWTON

Do you mean talking to the landlord? Thats young Glover the road supervisor isnt it? Whatever brought you here Remus? You never said you were coming! Praps its nothing after all.

REMUS NEWTON

No I didnt. I only made my mind up after youd gone.

MRS. NEWTON

Its nothing of course not Oh really. It was funny your running across me here wasnt it? What the devil shall I say? I called here to catch Dame Peach and pay that little bill. She always stops here.. Thats a good idea. But what brings you here into the Badling of Ducks?

REMUS NEWTON

To find Julius Morgan!

MRS. NEWTON

Oh gracious whats this He cant mean No Im going crazy Do you owe him a bill too? He cant know Im getting scared about nothing keep cool

REMUS NEWTON

You neednt pretend any longer Marion!

MRS. NEWTON

*Are you trying to be funny? Hes only guessing of*course What a good thing Glovers keeping his back to us Of course hes afraid Remusll be jealous of him and praps Id better No thats no good Whats the idea?*

REMUS NEWTON

Oh no Im not feeling at all funny. You came here to meet that scally-wag. Where is he anyhow?

MRS. NEWTON

If youre trying to quarrel with me your making a mistake. You sound to me as if youve been into too many pubs already. Ill thank you to behave yourself. Who do you think youre talking to? One of the school children. Ill show him the idea He doesnt know that he—

REMUS NEWTON

Thats no good. No, you neednt look like that! You see Ive got the letter!

MRS. NEWTON

Oh God Whats this mean What are you raving about! What Letter? Im dreaming of course That Judds pretending not to listen and little

Glover Has Remus gone out of his mind He cant mean—thats absurd *Have you gone out of your senses? I think I must have done Which letter?*

REMUS NEWTON

This letter! Your little note to Friend Julius. You addressed to Morgan Julius Esq and it came back this morning after youd left so I brought it in with me. I was afraid youd be waiting about all day you see!

MRS. NEWTON

Oh Oh what—You opened my letter you swine—Here!. He shant have—

REMUS NEWTON

Steady! Here....Hey!—Stop that.....

MRS. NEWTON

You shant have my letter. It wasnt mine. You beast. Ahhhhh!!! I will have it I will That got it Oh you beast you beast—

TOM GLOVER

Hey! Steady Newton....You cant beat your wife in here.

JOHNSON JUDD

Stop that!. Stop it I say. Here! Damn that fellow!

REMUS NEWTON

Would you snatch. Ha! You bitch youve scratched—here!

MRS. NEWTON

You devil youve broken my wrist. Oh you beast

TOM GLOVER

He'll kill her....Stop it. She's scratched....Give over..

JOHNSON JUDD

If you dont stop that Ill come over to you. Ah! That its—

REMUS NEWTON

No you dont my girl! Oh No! Who the hell are you talking to my little chap. Run home or ill smack your face.

MRS. NEWTON

I will have it. Hold him Tom hes got my—hold his hand..

TOM GLOVER

What the hell—take that—would you? And that...Ill shew....

JOHNSON JUDD

Ill soon stop—My God hes knocked him clean—My door! Hey!

REMUS NEWTON

Take that and that and that...Dont go....Ill shew..

MRS. NEWTON

Thats it hold....Oh! They....He.....Youve killed him. Oh Remus!

JOHNSON JUDD

Well—Im damned; Clean through the door too! Damn these school masters! I cant have this though....Out you go Missis!

MRS. NEWTON

Dont hold my arm. What a smash. He shouldnt have interfered between us though! I never thought Remus had it in him. You leave me alone you great.....

JOHNSON JUDD

Out of this. Come on! I cant have brawling in my private bar.

MRS. NEWTON

I shant go for you or anybody else. Here Remus Remus Hes....

REMUS NEWTON

Hi! Leave my wife alone wont you—do you hear! Ill give you what I gave that other—

JOHNSON JUDD

Who the hell are you talking to? Out of this I say! Oh no Im not going to fight this time in the morning. Ill have you....

MRS. NEWTON

Then you should leave me alone. I wasnt doing anything to you.

REMUS NEWTON

You mind your own business. Come along Marion and lets go to a respectable house.

JOHNSON JUDD

Certainly. Do. And give em my regards. And shut the door after you if you please.

MRS. NEWTON

Its all a mistake Remus. Ill explain and what shall I say How strong he must be Where is Glover Bolted I must say something.

REMUS NEWTON

No dont explain. The less said the better. Ive thought it all out as I came in the train. Lets go home and say no more about it. Folks only get talking and then where are you. That Gloverll keep his mouth shut in the future! Lets go and have something to eat. I feel hungry after all that exercise.

MRS. NEWTON

All right darling. Can I have been mistaken in him Fancy his reading it What a fool I was to write at all Ill never do it again All right Remus my Dear; as you like! Oh I see hes scared of its getting out thats all Still he did land Tom Glover one and Yes darling Im sure youre right and better so.

JOHNSON JUDD

Well Im damned. Thats a nice start for a quiet day! Tom Glover wont hear the last of that for many a day! Hullo—whats This?....A letter..... "My dear Julius darling; I must see you at once because the worst has happened and——" Hullo! Hullo! I must shew this to Dame Peach!.....

St. Augustine

By HILDEGARDE FLANNER

(Being old, and remembering the pears he stole, when he was a boy in Africa).

I would not remember now, Saviour,
How I sinned,
But how my yellow ankles sang
Running in the wind;

How my laughter, like a flag,
Floated out and hung
In the orchard where I ran—
(Shepherd, I was young).

Fair the pears we stole, Lord.
I have set it all
In a book confessing
Sin and sinner's fall.

Now I am an old man,
Waiting, Lord, until
I shall see my last star
Beckon and grow still.

And I would remember,
Not the days I erred,
Not the nights I wandered from
The shining of your word,

But I would remember
What it was to be
A boy alive in Africa,
Beneath a silver tree!

Contact

By JOHN CORBEL

IF I had been older I should have called him "ascetic." And so should have the other boys. That is what we all meant when we nick-named him "Stonemug." We were trying in our ripening, impudent way to place him in the social if not consciously the biological scheme. We wanted to describe to each other his curious impassiveness which made him seem indifferent, coldly indifferent, to any sort of delightful, thrilling thing. He was equally unmoved when Curtis, the squirming little quarterback, made a dashing, zigzagging run down the field and when fried chicken and ice cream were served at the same meal. He ate the chicken as though it meant no more to him than cold lamb.

But, naturally, it was his face, unmoved, stern, grey, which impressed us and earned him the unimaginative sobriquet. As for his figure, delicate and rather well-proportioned, we did not even notice it. Obviously, it was not suitable for an athlete.

You must understand, before I go on, that I shared implicitly the same view as my schoolmate of the color of Mr. Holcomb's personality. It was an opinion I did not change although, one day, he asked me to go out walking with him through the hills which were near the school, and I went. The walk was a strange, silly sort of an experience, I thought. I remember one thing of it in particular: He pointed to some wild-

flowers growing near a stone wall and said, "They are leaning their heads against the stonewall. Don't you think men are something like flowers? Don't you sometime feel like a flower?" I am giving his very own words.

I owe it to the general regard the boys had for my splendid ordinariness that my occasional Sunday walking through the hills with him was not misconstrued. As one of the "big" men of the school, it was sufficient for me to explain, "I'm pretty low in Latin, got to soft soap old Stonemug a little."

As a matter of fact I could not avoid going out with old Holcomb, every once in a while when he asked me, though I hated it awfully. Somehow he forced me to go, although I had rather do anything else. Not that I was exactly afraid. A strapping tackle of sixteen is not afraid of a puny little scholar of maybe over forty. He could not hurt me. It wasn't what he could do to me physically which made me unready to refuse his "Corbel, a little walk this afternoon?" To be as specific as I can, it was the raising, as he said these words, of the veiny blue lids of his eyes and revealing, so to speak, in those eyes a world of stangeness to me. It was the power of this world in his eyes, of which I could know nothing, which overwhelmed my ignorance. The knowledge in his eyes to me was as infinite as God's and as powerful.

An odd thing was that he never asked anyone else to go out with him and he asked—or commanded—me only four

or five times at the most. Outside of these weird and to me wholly profitless journeys, he did not seem in touch with anyone at the school for the whole year. He was just in himself, all the time—"Stonemug." Of course, it puzzled me a lot why he should bother with me. Especially considering that he was nasty to me in class downright nasty. Picked me out of the bunch at pretty nearly every recitation for a particular bawling out. It seemed as if I could never prepare a lesson right for him. I decided to find out why this was, so, before he started out in his usual vein of talking as we stirred along the road, one brisk March day, I had the nerve to ask him what I had done that he should always select me for a calling down. All the sense that I could get out of him was a mumbled "We kill the things...."

Of course this was no sort of an answer, but pry as I would I could get no more out of him, though it was clear the way he looked at me that he imagined he had made everything plain. Little actions like this, in everyone of which he showed himself different from anyone I had ever seen, made me wonder what was in a man like this, not at all like the other men and boys. It reminded me of all the fairy story rot we are told when we are children, about other worlds, filled with strange people.

I talked to Bill, my room-mate, about it, saying, "Bill, this Stonemug' is funny. He makes me think of someone from another world if there were, for instance, other worlds." I don't know whether Bill understood me, but he agreed that old Holcomb was queer.

Certainly he had a queer way of talking. I talked with him, or rather

he talked at me, the first day of school. I was a new boy and he was a new master. In a month I was tackle on the football team and a good fellow; in the same time he became "Stonemug." But on the first day I was shy like most new boys, despite my great hulk which would naturally give me some immediate prestige. It seemed to me that he too must have been feeling a little awkward—only apparently he never got over it. So we got talking on a little side porch of the main house where nobody came very much.

"You feel the friction, don't you?" he said. "The friction of this place. The people here. The new contacts. It's like a lot of little electric wires coming into touch with your own electric wire and giving off sparks, which blaze up and disappear, leaving little stings. Then there are others which are dead wires and you touch them and nothing happens, only a great unfriendliness of deadness. If perhaps there were some electric courage which meeting yours, could be inducted into your power and yours into its so the precious fluid could interchange, it would be good, eh?" He then lifted the lids of blue criss-crosses and looked at me with very bright, earnest eyes. It was all simply crazy to me, and I tried to look at him hard and show him how silly I thought he was. But his eyes looked so dead serious that I felt very embarrassed and stammered foolishly. "Yes, sir, I think you're right, sir." As soon as I could I hurried off, determined to make friends with some of my fellows and shake off the humiliating awkwardness I felt.

I never could get any sense out of the things he said to me on Sunday

afternoons, and yet he would keep on talking to me, though sometimes we would walk for long without exchanging a word and he would have a kind of contented smile on his face and not seem to notice me at all. When he did talk, he often got quite carried away in his speech and made sweeping gestures with his hands and said, "Corbel, Corbel, Corbel, listen to this!" And there would follow some strange thing.

One afternoon for example he discussed art. That is he said many things which he said were about art, and I tried earnestly to understand him, not only because I wanted to be polite and because I thought art must be a good thing but also because I had a kind of pity for him. He said, "Art, of course, is the conscious expression of beauty. But beauty is the thing. Beauty is the superlative in detachment, in isolation. It has no human warmth to it. There may be warmth in it, but that is from the glow of its pureness, not because it has any of man's nature. Now, take that tree, with those branches which dip down and then furl upward, making a pattern which. . . ." He seemed to get stuck, his arms lifted above his head, his eyes with a defeated look because he was not able to explain the pattern to me. He faced me quickly and began again earnestly: "Take, for instance, your figure, with head set on your shoulders so and your arms leaned against the fence this way and your legs bent a little and coming down in parallel lines. There is a pattern in that too. My eyes see it and tell my mind and I get a great pleasure—it is intellectual. There is no warmth to it. It is separate, separate. Do you see?" With all the brightness in his eyes, un-

covered and burning into me, he stood for several minutes until I became too uncomfortable and had to look down and up and knicked a stone and undid my arms from the fence, holding them awkwardly by my sides because I was conscious of something he had said about the position of my arms being beautiful. Then, as I said nothing, he looked as though he were hurt and presently the lids fell again and the whole stage of his face changed and he was again "Stonemug." We went back to the school quickly. He was impassive and looked as though nothing were touching him, neither the stones or trees about him nor, as for his mind, the nearness of me.

I felt that finally he was disappointed in me for, after that time, which was about the fifth we had gone out together and in the early spring of the year, "Stonemug" did not invite me again. I was relieved, and he would have quickly dropped entirely away from me if he had not continued to lay it on me in class. Every day it was "Corbel, it is plain that you are unprepared" or "Corbel, do try to take a little pains."

"Stonemug" was distinctly not a success at the school. The other masters did not understand him. The boys could not make him out at all, I not the least. For a school which boasted in its catalogue the "importance of the influence of strong, virile masters upon the young boy in his formative period," Holcomb was not a great asset. He was negative. It was whispered about that he was to be done away with, that he would not be there another year. If Holcomb knew this, there was no change in his demeanor for, indeed,

there was no demeanor of any note to change.

During the spring, it was as if there was no such man as Holcomb as a part of the school. The impassive face had become as familiar and unnoticed as any part of the physical equipment of the institution. I never thought about him. The regular reproofs in the Latin room were a part of the routine for me and I am sure I should have left school that year without Holcomb or his connection with me ever again entering my head if it hadn't been for his calling me to his room on Commencement day, the day of a curious incident which closes my memory of him.

It was the last day. We were rapidly putting out of our heads everything concerning school. We were thinking only of prizes which would be given out that afternoon and of the long vacation ahead. I am sure everybody had forgotten "Stonemug." He sent for me by a boy. "Old Stonemug wants to see you in his room." I thought it was a rather imperious summons, not with very good grace from a master who had not been a success, and now that school was really over. And, too, I was with my mother and father who had come up for the ceremonies of the day. Still, somehow I felt I had to go, and I went, thinking what a fool I was and what a cursed bother he.

As it turned out, he did not have

much to say and I did not completely understand that.

"Corbel," he said, "this is hard for me to say." He really seemed nervous, keeping his hands shoved way down in absurd, baggy trousers. But he had not lifted the lids, and his face was stone, conforming very well with the stern, ugly mission bed, bureau, table and chair which filled the little coop of a room. "But I wanted you to know—perhaps you will understand later, probably you won't—that it has been very difficult for me to keep from growing too fond of you. It wouldn't have done. That is, I've had to keep from liking you too well. You see, when a person explores personalities and gets to looking into other beings closely"—The lids fought to come up, I'll swear, and he squeezed his eyes tight—"it is not well....Corbel.... boy!.... say, Corbel!....I just wanted to say goodbye and very good luck!"

The way he moved me with his still face toward the door showed clearly that he did not want any sort of reply, and I went out, feeling horribly foolish, but not angry at all. And there was in my heart a twinge of regret which I had never felt before about Holcomb, as though something had not only not been understood, but about which there never could be an understanding, as though we were losing an explanation of life by not being able to come into close touch with each other. It seemed to be something beyond either Holcomb or me even if he had got much closer to it.

Nurmahal

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

T HERE was one who overheard the spirit of Nurmahal speaking to Jehangir, "Lord," she said "you have honored me above all women, and because of this tomb you have built for me I am unforgotten through the years. I am folded about with marble screens and fretted work and jewel work, and lie like a conqueror in a pavilion of stone set among spears, with basins of water like a long carpet rolled out before me. My memory is sweet as a curl of incense smoke in the nostrils of the world, I lie, the heart of a dream. Yet Lord I grow weary in my coffin, and as the years pass, I picture the darkness with all the beauty of our lives, passing like a soundless procession before me. And I remember the first day you saw me and the words that you spoke to me, and at the memory a flame seems to rise from my ashes, and flicker groping towards you; and picture you as you rode in the midst of your warriors a victor, and shining in your armor, with the dust thick in the mane of your horse. But most of all I remember the garden of Shalimar that you built me in the vale of Kashmir above Shrinager, the City of the Sun. And I imagine that I feel again the cool wind from the mountains upon my cheek, fresh like dew-wet petals, it used to be, when we came up into the hollow of the snows from the hot dry plains of your empire. Oh I am weary of lying here in the tomb when the shepherds are piping upon the hills. The peach blossoms are in bloom and nearly hide the villages under the toss of their branches, and the ducks have returned to the reeds by the borders of the lakes, and the birds go flying above the purple irises with a rustle of their darting wings, and the white mountains look upon the valley like beautiful women who have let down their veils to feel the wind on their foreheads! And it seems to me that we are sitting in the pavilion with the pillars of black marble, and the fountains are perfumed that fall in spray on every side of us, and we are alone, and I raise my veil and smile and hear you saying gravely "Now the flowers may bloom." Lying here in the unstirring darkness I try to remember the scents of the roses, and the way the wind pulled at my hair and stirred the folds of my garments, and my coffin echoes with the birds singing among the chenar trees, and the droning of bees in the orchards, and I yearn for the feel of soft earth under the soles of my feet.

"One day I remember we came upon the daughter of a gardener kneeling in the soil planting seeds. Her hands were thick with dirt, and her feet were slipperless and her breast showed through a rent in her bodice.

She did not hear us coming, and when she saw whose shadow it was that fell across her, she was very frightened and could hardly answer the questions we put to her. The birds twittered close to her hands watching for stray seeds, and the sun shone on her back. I gave her a little ring, I think, and I remember that I pitied her, but now, my lord, as I lie here it comes to me that I would give all the state of my burial and his coffin, and the fretted marble, the inlays and pillars, and even my fame which does not die in the world to be for one spring afternoon even a gardener's daughter in the high Shalimar."

Calidus Juventa?

By ALLEN TATE

*Non ego hoc ferrem, calidus juventa,
Consule Planco.*

We are afraid that we have not lived.
We are not afraid of dying.
Toss images to the indifferent morning
Amid laughter and crying—
Amid fitful buffetings of strangled hearts
While they are dying.

Draw tight the words of death shivering
On the strictured page—
The cup of Morgan Fay is shattered.
Life is a bitter sage,
And we are weary infants
In a palsied age.

Reviews

THE SOUL OF A CHILD

BY EDWIN BJORKMAN

(*Alfred A. Knopf, 1922*)

IT is not unlikely that the first three decades of the twentieth century will come to be remembered as the period of the gradual lifting of sex taboos in writing, in open discussion, in conversation, in the privacy of one's thoughts—for who can doubt that the most tyrannous “*verboden*” of all is that which is issued, with the unconscious cunning and hypocrisy of silence, by the ego to its lone, bewildered self? We are in the exciting thick of this lifting of the taboo, hardly more, it may be, than a feverishly self-conscious return to a lost freedom. It is not strange, therefore, that we tend to shift the emphasis from the uses to which our new-found defiance may lead us to the fact of defiance itself. We tolerate on the wave of our release much rubbishy flotsam and jetsam of the sexual genus, seeing rather to what outlines the wave than to what the wave carries. Later on, when the facts of sex, normal and abnormal, will have been calmly accepted as the mere facts that they are and the mention of sexual activities, performed or desired, will, as activities, no more make a piece of literature than an apple tree, as apple tree, makes a beautiful landscape, it will be possible to forget about the discovery of sex and to look to the added range and power that may have come to literature in the

process of discovery. A literary artist can hardly have the *entrée* to too many sorts of really existing human fancies and human relations. Meanwhile, whatever helps along the growing sexual honesty should be welcome.

Mr. Edwin Bjorkman's first novel, if novel it may be truly called, is such an honest book. Not that it revels in sexuality or even that it devotes a great part of its volume to sexual matters. The important point is that it does not dodge either the existence or the significance of sexual curiosity and sexual desire in the years of innocence which precede full-blown adolescence. Vague and mysterious stirrings trouble young Keith from time to time, “bad boys” give him a snickering half knowledge of things which he feels are somehow waiting for discovery, he experiences a tentative satisfaction in the blind alley of auto-eroticism. All this comes in for no more than casual and matter of fact treatment; sex is here neither a romantic island in a sea of drabness nor a carefully tucked away zero. And this is as it should be. It is agreeable to find a reporter of childhood who is doubly honest, being neither discreetly silent nor clamorous and hectic. Only a frenzied prude could lift up his voice against Mr. Björkman, only such spotless denizens of Eden as keep “gentlemen cows” in their menageries. Less immaculate mortals will find his pages perfectly cool and white and rather more honest than the records of Tom Sawyer and

Huck Finn. Such a book as "The Soul of a Child" does indeed light up the artificiality of Mark Twain's conception of roughneck boyhood, that blissful state of desperate and lovable wickedness flowering out of a snow-covered soil of innocence.

Far be it from me to deny the uses of "Huckleberry Finn," delectable and romantic. But if the truth, too, has its value—and we seem to be minded these days to know something of it,—there can be no question that Mr. Björkman has more of it to give us than our humorist. His book is hardly a "novel," despite the publisher's quite legitimate attempt to persuade us that it is. It is a sober, categorical narrative of a poor boy's life, inner and outer, in the not very colorful Stockholm of Mr. Björkman's memory. It is just because the author has refrained from composing his incidents and characters into a story, has set down his little irrelevances as they occur to him in retrospect, and has refused to mould his Keith to a preconceived type that we trust him implicitly. We know that what he has to tell us is true. There is nothing strange, nothing unexpected in his narrative, but there is plenty of that stubborn individuality of the real that we all harbor in our recollections and that no novelist has ever succeeded in inventing out of a whole cloth. How grandma stays in the kitchen with apologetic pride, how a well to do playmate fraternizes and snubs at one and the same time, how a severe and virtuous aunt lets out advice, such incidents Mr. Björkman tells clearly and simply. They have value for us, as disconnected and unexciting pictures out of our childhood have never ceased to seem worth holding onto.

Keith's childhood is typical of a certain style of boy. He is an only son, sensitive and impressionable. His mother attaches him firmly to herself, far more compellingly than is going to be good for him. Psychoanalysts see a "mother fixation" forming which is destined to hold him for many troublous years. Thrown back largely on himself, for his father comes home tired and moody, the boys downstairs are not nice, and home is too cramped to make guests other than a nuisance, Keith develops into a quiet, timid and introspective child. He tends to hero-worship, to lone friendships. A growing sense of his parents' poverty and social inferiority create a mingled self-contempt and resentment in his soul which will one day find shape and compensation in a radical faith. The love of beautiful things lies dormant in him, there is little or nothing to stimulate it into expression. Petty virtues and meaningless faiths are all about to strangle him. Between his father and himself is an abyss of silence, a growing misunderstanding which expresses itself too sparsely to come to a head; the mother is both too clinging and too imperious in her love to be of intelligent assistance. Books are his refuge, knowledge his ideal. Keith is rapidly becoming an "introverted" personality and though, at the end of the book, he revolts against the compulsions of school life and seeks independence in an office, it is a fair guess that he will need greater luck or a more kindly and understanding sympathy to weather the coming storms than the average boy can count on.

There is nothing lugubrious or clinical about "The Soul of a Child." The shadows, present and threatening, are offset by many cheerful episodes. There is

Christmas, with endless gifts and lots and lots to eat, and there are pleasant vacations in the country. But as one lays down the book, he asks, with a lingering wistfulness, "Is childhood really so happy as we would have it?" and finds it strangely difficult to peer into the mist that hangs through the life of emotion of our early years. As the child looks forward to the time when he will be grown up and free, so we, one suspects, have created for ourselves the myth of childish irresponsibility and freedom. The child and the adult escape into the dream of the other's far distant happiness. Certainly Keith, as he is presented to us in this book, was not what we should gladly call "happy," but perhaps it takes the retrospective analysis of as keen and retentive a mind as Mr. Björkman's to prove how far from happy he was and to imply how happy he might have been. Such books as "The Soul of a Child" do more to create sympathy for the very real sufferings of childhood than any amount of psychological research and theory.

EDWARD SAPIR.

THE CENCI

By PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(*New Theatre, London, November 18, 1922*)

IT is not a matter for wonder that a public performance of Shelley's "The Cenci" has at last been given in London, the chief city of his native country, 105 years after it was written. The only wonder is that it has been given at all before an English-speaking audience;

for we have had little evidence that the Anglo-Saxon mind has abated the prudery, squeamishness, and abhorrence of certain facts relating to human nature which have characterized it both previous to and since the days of Shelley.

However, for the increased mental sanitation evidenced in England by the official permission to present and witness this tragedy-poem after the long ban upon it, let us be duly thankful. The repercussion may be good upon that portion of darkest America which saw only evil in Whitman, forbade the performance of Shaw's "Mrs. Warren's Profession," and pounced more recently upon certain books by Dreiser, Lawrence, Cabell, and others.

After witnessing this long to-be-remembered first performance of "The Cenci", one cannot understand, even after making due allowance for pre-, mid-, and post-Victorian rigidities, the source of the fears which for so long forbade it a public hearing. It deals in part with incest, yes; but so do the police-court newspapers which for years have entered the Sabbath homes of Britain and America, and so does Oedipus. It deals with hatred between children and father, but so does Lear. It deals with merciless Pope, but it has long been admitted, even by ardent Catholics, that some of history's Holy Fathers, in name, were most unholy men in practice.

Nevertheless the management of the Covent Garden Theatre, in which Shelley rashly hoped that his poem-play would be given, since he was perfectly willing that his own maligned name be kept out of it, refused to touch it even with tongs, and not until 1886 was it produced in a London theatre, a suburban one, and under private auspices

where admission was limited to subscribers.

Even now one fails to understand the reason for this virtuous horror which endured from 1819 to 1922, so bathed in human pity is this darkly coloured but translucent drama, so musical its most clamorous language, so dominant does it show the spirit of love, joined to resolute courage, over the most resistless torrents of evil in those far-off Italian days when religion was an attitude toward life and not a check upon human conduct.

In fact, one would think that those who must have it would find Moral Purpose enough to Shelley's drama; the father who seeks to corrupt not only the body, but the soul of his offspring meets his just deserts in death; murder is soon discovered and horribly punished; iniquitous bribery fails; inciters pay the penalty no less than the incited; the prevailing statutes are enforced; in every respect the majesty of the law is thunderously upheld. It should be pointed out, however, that Shelley in his preface to the play expressly disavowed any moral purpose; if he had any aim, he intimated, it was only to shed some healing light on the hidden and involved workings of the tormented human heart.

Nowadays there is a disposition to read autobiography into Shelley's poem. Read in the light of symbolism, the wronged and unhappy Beatrice, disavowed and dishonored by her own father, can be no other than himself. Then who is Count Cenci, who took a sensual delight in maltreating his own children? His negative land, which heaped so many humiliations upon him?

And who is Lucretia, the too soft mother? And who the weak lover, Orsino? We can only surmise.

As for the performance itself, the producer, Mr. Lewis Casson, gave the play just as written, except for a few lines. This was done in a spirit of loyalty to be admired, but its effect was to make it evident that for stage purposes the final prison scene might well be shortened. It contains altogether too many lines and in the hands of an actress less commanding than Miss Sybil Thorndike, who was the Beatrice, the sense of overwhelming tragedy might have been spread too thin.

Miss Thorndike as the sweetly wise and gentle girl whose character Shelley evidently adored was not quite convincing, but as the deeply wronged and fearless woman she reached the poet's own exalted heights. She made the court scene where the shining Beatrice questions the dark and cowering Marzio a truly magnificent one.

The staging and the setting were simple; they did not try to make the audience forget that the play was the thing.

There were some fears that the play would prove to be wearisomely long; in 1886 it is said to have lasted more than four hours; but thanks to a time-saving device it lasted only two and a half hours at this matinee. This device consisted of having the characters left upon the stage at the close of each scene, walk down front so as to permit the hanging curtains to fall and screen the installation of the next setting.

Surpassing in interest even Miss Thorndike's noteworthy "Medea," this performance of "The Cenci" was the event of the London theatrical season

and since it is being repeated in a series of other matinees, it will serve to offset the banality of the second-rate importations from Broadway which are making Picadilly Circus look much like Longacre Square.

PHILLIPS RUSSELL.

CASANOVA'S HOMECOMING

BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

(*Thomas Seltzer, 1922*)

THE effect of the decisions rendered in the case of Mr. Seltzer (defending "Casanova's Homecoming," "Women in Love" and a "Young Girl's Diary") and Messrs. Boni and Liveright ("The Satyricon" is to draw the teeth of Mr. Sumner and the Society for the Suppression of Vice. "It has now been established"—says Mr. Gilbert Seldes in the November Dial—"that you cannot, in America, read a few lines from a book, stressing a few words which otherwise used might be indecent, and expect the book to be barred from circulation; it has been further established that the decency and dignity of a great writer's position shall be considered in determining even the probable effect of a book on its reader; specifically it has been stated that the description of manners and customs in other (worse) ages is not a criminal offense in this country. Worst of all, the young person is reduced to the ranks, uncaptialized and almost decapitated as an authority on literature." Let us rejoice! Perhaps there will be an American edition of "Ulysses". Another effect of the decisions is to advertise the works which the Vice Society would have suppressed. So far I have not read

"Women in Love" nor a "Young Girl's Diary," but I shall certainly do so at the earliest opportunity. "The Satyricon" is, of course, a classic which everybody has read. "Casanova's Homecoming" is a potential classic, which everybody, or almost everybody, should read.

The Casanova Schnitzler portrays in his novel is not the Casanova of the Memoirs; or, at least, no longer. Written toward the close of his life, in his Memoirs Casanova exhibits himself as he had once been; or, possibly, only as he would like to have been—handsome, irresistible, ubiquitously successful, the man of the thousand amours and thousand escapades. This Casanova exists too in the novel but only in retrospect; only in recollection, however vivid. The Casanova of the novel is in his fifty-third year. With the approach of old age, his "inward and outward lustre" are beginning to fade. While still successful with women; he is no longer ubiquitously successful. His means are now extremely slender; and he has only two suits, one of which is a trifle shabby. He is homesick, and in the opening chapter is waiting at Mantua in a modest but respectable inn where he has stayed in happier years—waiting for a pardon to arrive from Venice from the Council. In the meantime, he is bored with his amusements—a polemic he is composing against Voltaire, the morning walks into the country, the evenings spent in gambling for petty stakes, and his hostess, a woman ardent but no longer young.

It is on one of these walks into the country that he encounters Olivo, a man whom he had befriended some fifteen years before. Olivo has since acquired a farm and amassed a comfortable for-

tune, but he has not forgotten Casanova, or the fact that the adventurer had once befriended him. Olivo invites Casanova to stay at his house until the arrival of the expected letter from Venice.

While he is hesitating whether or no to accept, Olivo prattles about his wife, his three daughters and a niece, who is young and erudite. Directly Casanova hears of the niece, he decides to accept. Amalia, Olivo's wife, he reflects is no younger and no prettier than she was when he last saw and possessed her; and Teresina, the eldest of the three daughters, is only thirteen and "at his age, a girl of thirteen would not find him interesting." Marcolina, the niece, is however a prospect. When he sees her, Casanova is consumed with the desire to possess her. She is not only young and erudite, but extremely beautiful. She is, however, disdainful of and indifferent to his advances; and he realizes that he will never possess her because he is old. He is mistaken, however. He does ultimately, by a trick. How the trick is turned is really the plot of the novel; the return to Venice which occurs in the last chapter being only a postlude, "Casanova's Last Adventure" (last at the time of writing) would be a more pertinent title than the actual.

Aside from the extremely interesting and ingenious plot, there is the episode of the seduction by Casanova of his host's daughter, the thirteen-year-old Teresina. This is perhaps the most unpleasant passage in the book, and in the hands of a lesser artist, or another than Schnitzler would be disgusting. This incident, however, completes for us the character of Casanova. If Schnitzler has drawn a Casanova less at-

tractive than the Casanova of the *Memoirs*, it is simply that he has drawn a Casanova old. The portrait he has drawn, if ugly, is admirably drawn.

LOUIS GILMORE.

A BOOK ABOUT MYSELF

BY THEODORE DREISER

(Boni & Liveright, 1922)

WHO is this cad who, riding in a dining car for the first time in his life, looks loftily out of the window at the station urchins hoping to make them believe that he is head of the steel trust? Who is this churl who complains, when a cub reporter, that the world fails to recognize his merit? Who is this clown that swaggers about in a tan overcoat and patent leather shoes trying to make factory and department store girls eye him with longing wonderment?

It is Mr. Theodore Dreiser, strutting through the pages of his "A Book About Myself." One would hardly have believed it! And yet, if I am not mistaken, this figure with its ridiculous desires, its bombast, its self-pity, its petty skull-dugeries, represents more than Mr. Dreiser. It represents all of the all of the rest of us, up to—and even past—the age of reason.

This book is said to be an honest autobiography, and in many, many respects it is. The author, while he has evidently skipped some events and glossed others, has put down those things which most autobiographers grow squeamish over and fail to write; the petty vanities, self-righteous complaints and daily chicaneries, things that persons even more broad than Methodists would classify as mean-souled. Family fights

and plights come to view, and if one has not read "A Hoosier Holiday" and "Twelve Men" one sees the origins of the Dreiser novels. And even if one has read these mentioned tomes one finds still other sources and origins.

Indeed, the chief value of the book, for me at least, lies in this aspect of it. One finds out who "Sister Carrie" is, who Hurstwood is, one sees again old man Gerhardt (though there has never been much doubt as to him): One meets the father of Aileen, one discovers the background for "The Financier," "The Titan," and "The Genius." One discovers the wife of The Genius, and so on and so on. Obscure points hitherto surmised or only half revealed by "A Hoosier Holiday" and "Twelve Men" come fully to light in "A Book About Myself." The whole warp and woof of Dreiser's life and novels cross and re-cross into a full pattern. As an autobiography the book is incomplete, skeletal, often vague, and sometimes wandering. And after all, it concerns only a few years of Dreiser's life—his newspaper days. But it is of his formative years, of the time when life most staggered him, of the days when he groped through the peculiarly American ignorance toward the truth, when he swam through a sea of swill toward the limpid waters of the Muses.

And it was this struggle, this naive wonderment, this terrific game of question-and-answer, these buffs and rebuffs that gave birth to the artist. They, moreover, laid the plots for every book that Dreiser has since written, and although the book of these years gives

no comprehensive idea of Dreiser's life and hence is intrinsically not a good autobiography, it gives the key to his whole existence. This book and all of Dreiser's others are really his autobiography, and a profound and interesting one they make.

Another aspect of the book, hardly less important than this key-to-the-code, has already been indicated: the transition from a raw, uncultured, loutish, (but high-potentialed) fellow, to the deep and thoughtful artist, as we know him today. This metamorphosis does not take place until near the end of the book, until Dreiser leaves his newspaper life in St. Louis for one in Pittsburgh. Up until this time he is purely the victim of circumstance and experience. He wonders but he cannot co-ordinate; he fights vigorously but entirely blindly.

The final shredding of the veil was due to quality always within him; his sympathy for humanity, his suffering over the sorrows and crimes and pathetic joys of existence, and it is the saturnalia of Pittsburgh, the discovery of Balzac, the rack-and-screw of New York City that clear his vision. The hodge-podge of life began then to take more definite pattern, form and color, and Dreiser emerged with about as unified a concept as it, perhaps, is possible to realize.

The beauty of it all is, however, that even after he became conscious of what little scheme there is to existence, he still remained much the same naive boy. He knew what to expect, he was disillusioned, and yet every event, every reaction of himself and of others surprised him anew. And even today he is astonished at the bubbling results of

the whole spectacle. This attitude explains the Dreiser artistry (but it does not explain itself). His books are sound in content, are true, vigorous, remarkable, and it is this childish wonderment that keeps them from having the hard and often superficial polish of those of, let us say, Hergesheimer it is this that gives what Mr. Mencken is pleased to call "depth and beam" to Dreiser's work.

And for all of their faults, their bad grammar, their awkward sentences, their too detailed statement, the Dreiser volumes have more sound literature to them than those of any other American writer. One suspects Sherwood Anderson—perhaps Dreiser's greatest rival—of striving for effect, and one is sure of it in such writers as Hecht, Floyd Dell, Cather, Sandburg and even Cabell, but not so with Dreiser. He is a great simpleton and consequently a great artist. He reminds me of a hound which I once owned. This dog would take a rabbit's trail and follow it to the grassy lair and then was immeasurably surprised when the rabbit bounced from under his feet. But there were always zest and thrills to the process; the result was always expected and yet always new.

But I cannot help comparing this book, a little unfavorably, to Dreiser's others. There is an element lacking which I, as a student of Dreiser, was disappointed in not finding, namely, the sources of sexual relations so freely exposed in the novels. In the autobiography there are merely one or two hints, and nothing else. I do not mean that I expected Dreiser to be so uncavalier-like as Kemp was in his

"Tramping on Life," so bald, so churlish toward the women—in practically revealing their identities, but I did expect to see the awakenings of that phase of Dreiser along with the intellectual and artistic dawns. But perhaps I am wrong, perhaps I am too sweeping, perhaps this development came later.

Well, I'll not weep over the lack. I am not morbid. Besides, I can guess a lot—and a cheering thought strikes me. On the last page of "A Book About Myself" Dreiser threatens to write its sequel.

G. D. EATON,

ARS MORIENDI

By MANUEL MACHADO

(*Editorial Mundo Latino, Madrid*)

A GOOD deal of water has flowed under Spanish bridges since that day, some twenty years ago, when the name of Manuel Machado first began to be important in Spanish letters. Since then Machado has gone on adding to a reputation which now stands second to none in that younger generation in a country where, according to Segura de la Garmilla's recent computation, there are no less than 150 poets of distinction who "gozan de merecida fama." Machado's work is always beautiful, even when, like that of Benavente's "poeta callejera," it is but "estrofas sin sentido pero resplandecientes de armonía."

In "Ars Moriendi" we have Machado's swan song, or at least poems written in the contemplation of death. "Death," he says in the opening poem, "death is. . . . There is a flower on the ground; when we awaken it is not yet

within our reach, with its impossible aromas and colors; and then one day, when there is no dawn, we cut it down.... Happy is he who forgets the reason of his long journey, and in a star, in a flower, in a cloud leaves behind something of his soul." In the succeeding poems where he contemplates with melancholy curiosity the spectacle of his declining years, the note is one of disillusionment, but not of regret:

And I said, Ah let me live!
Meaning, to love, to kiss, to sing,
To look, to touch, to dream....
To despair!

Now I sigh, Ah let me die!
Meaning, silence, blindness, night,
Absence, resignation, gloom....
And hope.

Or in this quatrain:

And she approaches! From our hour of
birth
She comes.... She passes....near or
far, upon
The selfsame road by which our eager
feet
Are hastening to meet her.

This little volume is arranged in five parts, "Ars Moriendi," "Melancholy Madrigals," "Autumn," "Pictures," "Dedications"; the last being a series of not-important stanzas addressed to Concepción Arrenal, Marshal Joffre, Sainz de Robles, Juan Merchán, and other contemporaries more or less celebrated. From the second group the following may be translated as typical of the author's mood of delicate sadness:

As a perfume shall I come to thee,
As a bewildering melody,
Blown by the wind from afar....

I shall be on your cheek as the air of
morning,
As a flower in your hair....
I shall give you....something that shall
seem like a kiss.

Most of these poems are very brief—a few lines, which depend for their significance upon the magical melody of which Machado is past master, and most of which is lost in translation. The longest in the collection, "Regreso," has notably that magic—strange and lovely words, set together like jewels in a mosaic, that fill the readers's mind with a sense of something beautiful and intangible, something which he does not grasp fully, but which behind a veil of exquisite sounds glides enticingly away:

Maravillosa noche, estremecida
por el rumor del agua
y el fulgor de los astros
—iman de la mirada
perdida en lo insondable
de la eterna pregunta....(el grillo
canta,
corre la estrella, el aire
suspira entre las ramas.)
Sueño tranquilo y sano,
velado por las plantas
humildes de la tierra, y por el bravo
eucalipto que asoma a mi ventana....
Noche de paz y de salud y sueño,
adios, adios, que la ciudad me llama!
J. S. KENDALL.

FUTILITY

(R. Cobden-Sanderson, London, 1922)

BESIDES being a "novel on Russian themes," this is a novel in the Russian manner: penetratingly witty and profoundly sad. Mr. Gerhardi is an artist of distinction, and his sharply etched scenes are full of a rare spontaneity and freshness that heighten their sense of reality. And he is economical. He scorns superfluous words and conventional wadding and his exclusions amount—almost—to genius. One is left with an extraordinarily vivid and persistent impression of this group of wealthy, middle class, futile, enchanting Russians, with all their—to put it mild-

ly—amazing informality, their maddening policy of watchful waiting, and the intricate, ridiculous, preposterous, heart-breaking complications and entanglements in which they are forever ensnared. They live in the midst of a crisis that spins itself out and out while they wait, patiently, hopefully, endlessly, for the arrival of that moment when they will begin to *live*—yet “nothing ever happens.” And in the meanwhile time, as it has a habit of doing, passes.

One’s acquaintance with the very complicated Bursanov family begins “some-what in the manner of an Ibsen drama with retrospective revelations”, in St. Petersburg in 1914, and ends — or, rather, the book ends; but who would willingly allow the mere ending of a book to sever their friendship with Nikolai Vasilievich and his lovable, unconventional family?—in Vladivostok after that “series of comic opera attempts to wipe out the Russian revolution”, that “adventure in futility”: intervention.

About Nikolai Vasilievich cluster a swarm of people—the family, the relations, the dependents—who look to him for their support and who follow him wherever he goes—and was there ever such a journey as the one to Omsk! They come and they go, and again they reappear for a moment, immersed in their own affairs while their world disintegrates about them; and they play tragic roles in a comic manner; and they wait, wait interminably, for that magic moment in their lives that is always just eluding them. Chaotic conditions and sudden and appalling transitions have no influence upon them. They are the most adaptable people in the world.

Luxury in Petrograd, discomfort in Vladivostok—it is all one to these futile, fascinating Russians.

The haunting sadness of the land forms a strange and melancholy background for this picture of gaily—tragically—irresponsible lives. For “who can convey at all adequately the sense of utter hopelessness that clings to a Siberian winter night? Wherever else is there to be found that brooding, thrilling sense of frozen space, of snow and ice lost in inky darkness, that gruesome sense of never-ending night, and black despair and loneliness untold, immeasurable? Add to this the knowledge of a civil war fumbling in the snow, of a people ill-fed, ill-clothed, and apathetic, lying on the frozen ground, cold and wretched and diseased.”

There is an amusing passage in which Fanny Ivanovna talks about the almost mythical gold mines and explains how they all live upon their “shares”—and upon each other. “I simply dread asking Nikolai Vasilievich for money,” she says.

“He hasn’t any?”

“He has. He’s always borrowing—crescendo, forte, fortissimo! But where will it end? When? Borrowing money is all right if you can do it. But it is not, as it were, an income; it’s not—how shall I put it?—an end in itself, is it?”

The character drawing is really surpassingly good, especially in the case of Fanny Ivanovna. And even the host of minor characters, who, as a rule, are barely sketched in with a deft stroke or two, stand out with a delightful clarity and life of their own; as, for instance, the two ancient grandfathers, and Uncle

Kostia, the man of letters, and the dishonest bookkeeper with his ingenious defence: "But I took in measure, Nikolai Vasilievich, conscientiously, with my eyes on God..."

ALICE SESSUMS LEOVY.

A FEW NOTICES

THE growing use of music of words for music's sake is marked in the latest volume of Genevieve Taggard's poems. (*For Eager Lovers, Genevieve Taggard. Thomas Seltzer, 1922.*) However, the compositions are not entirely without discords. About a third of the poems are very satisfactory while a few, such as *Epithalamium*, *Beach Cabin*, and *Endless Circle* are downright exceptional. The most of these poems are lyrical and several become sing-song in their manufacture. They are all erotic. Are we returning to Swinburne?

WHY a witty, puckish folk tale should be called by the lugubrious title of *The Soldier and Death*, is beyond comprehension. This slender pamphlet translated from the Russian by Arthur Ransome (*B. W. Huebsch, 1922*), is too brief for analysis, too simple for criticism, but far too charming to overlook. It belongs to that category of tales that are obviously written for children, but can only be appreciated by adults.

PUBLISHING a book of poems before one has written enough to make a discriminating selection is really a very bad idea. This year's winner of the Knopf poetry prize, Charles Wagner of Columbia College, seemingly proves this in his "Poems of the

Soil and Sea" (*Alfred A. Knopf, 1922*), by the publishing of a large number of very ordinary verses. Mr. Wagner was no doubt selected for the beauty of one or two poems, which are included, rather than by the total of his works.

LITERARY criticism and interpretation bear ironical fruit. Pope translated Homer and Dryden translated Virgil. And now with the revival of interest in Amiel, it is discovered that he gave an eloquent and exhaustive discourse on Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The translation of this address by Van Wyck Brooks (*B. W. Huebsch, 1922*) adds to the small Englished library of Amiel and adds to one's opinion of this exaggerated idealist. And strange to say, it is a just and conclusive essay on the man Rousseau, as well as on his philosophy. The translation is as simple and as charming as Mrs. Humphrey Ward's of the *Journal Intime*.

UNHERALDED and unsung, there seems to have come an unknown knight into the tournament of verse with no mean bearing. This is Raymond Holden, author of "Granite and Alabaster" (*Macmillan, 1922*). Although one must wade through several pages of jingles and inverted prose, the discovery of a poem like *Fishing*, *The Dissembling Look* and *Nocturne* is worth the search. The faults in the collection are really very few in comparison with the average work of this sort and none are grave. Although there are several slender verses in the book, the most are sturdy enough to hold sound poetic beauty and warmth of color. One feels virility without brutality and brutality without bestiality.

JOHN HICKS MONTGOMERY.